



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

21 October 2014

Dear Member

I'm delighted to provide the seventh annual President's Report, outlining the activities and achievements of your Association over the past 12 months.

The focus of the RTRA over the past 12 months has been on three main projects:

1. The continuing evolution of the Pinjar Motorcycle Area
2. Embedding trail bike riding in the Western Australian trails community
3. Promoting the RTRA-developed rider education program to local councils

It has been a very successful year on those three fronts, but of course there is so much more that we could be doing and want to do.

Our mission is to ensure a sustainable future for recreational trail and quad bike riding. To do that we need to ensure that we have land to ride on. We need to keep the land we've got and open up new areas to meet local demand.

We do not want to see the day when the only riding that can be done is in organised and controlled events. Trail riding is about the freedom to explore, but with that comes a responsibility to look after the land on which we ride. So our advocacy work has to be as much aimed at the riders we represent as it is towards land managers and regulators.

We're now at a critical time. The South West Mountain Bike Master Plan has been released for public comment and there is a very significant overlap between areas the mountain bike fraternity has identified for future mountain bike hubs and the areas that have been enjoyed by responsible trail riders for many years. We could lose many of these trails, but if we play our cards right we might end up with new, purpose designed single trail in prime locations. The RTRA is working hard to ensure that we are eating at the same table as the walkers and horse riders and mountain bikers, not just sitting quietly in the corner waiting to have a few leftover scraps thrown at us.

So what have we achieved over the past 12 months?

## Membership

As of today we have attracted over 1,300 families to join the RTRA representing around 2,500 riders.

While this is a useful number we have a long, long way to go. We are still only talking to a small proportion of the estimated 50,000 trail and quad bikes in Western Australia, so we're actually working on behalf of many times the number of members we have.

The number of members on our database who are currently financial has not gone backwards, but neither has it substantially improved since this time last year. We are about to embark on a membership drive in the southern suburbs which should both increase our membership and give us



the additional lobbying power we need to get things happening south of the river.

## Political Recognition

We continue to maintain strong relationships with key politicians and have recently met with the Ministers for Local Government and Sport and Recreation.

At a recent recreation leaders breakfast, Minister Waldron raised the State Trail Bike Strategy as the first item on the agenda. While there have as yet not been any significant announcements we do know that a Cabinet Submission has recently been tabled and there are moves underway to get at least some action happening.

## Advocacy

Our advocacy efforts this year have focussed on cementing our place within the Western Australian trails community. Some highlights include:

- Active role in 'Outdoors October' - the key initiative to promote outdoor recreation in Western Australia. Trail bike riding is one of six outdoor activities featured on promotional banners, and our Pinjar Open Day was promoted via the Outdoors October web site and Facebook page.
- A voice on the Trails Reference Group -
- Supported our mountain biking brethren by requesting RTRA members to not ride on the dedicated mountain bike trails in Kalamunda
- Recognition in the De-proclaimed Dams study - to explore opportunities for increased recreation in areas that were previously excluded due to water catchment restrictions. Trail bike riding is one of the activities being considered in this DSR / DPaW study.
- Inclusion in Trails WA - trails in the Pinjar Motorcycle Area have been listed on the TrailsWA web site - the main source of trails information across all trail types in Western Australia.
- Visibility at the State Outdoor Recreation and Trails Conference. Our 'Go on, Get Riding' banner was centre stage throughout the conference.

## Trails and Riding Areas

### Pinjar

The Pinjar Motorcycle Area was again our primary focus in the past year. There were several reasons for this:

1. Pinjar is a critical demonstration site that is intended to pave the way for similar family-friendly facilities in the future.
2. DPaW, and especially the Swan Coastal Region, have been fantastic partners in the project, providing money, machinery and manpower to make the area better for riders and their families
3. It is a 'good news story' that can be drawn upon to counter any negative publicity that trail bikes get.
4. It is incredibly popular for families and we need to keep upping the capacity to keep pace with demand.



5. With limited resources it is better to do a few things really well than several projects in a half-baked way.

Just after last year's AGM the resurfaced Family Trail was opened. We were delighted to have Charley Boorman along to cut the ribbon and ride the trail, and this created an opportunity to invite senior executives from DSR, DPaW and the Lotteries Commission to come and see what has been created.

The long-awaited 'Short n Curly' reconstruction was completed just in time for the 2014 Pinjar Open Day. The 1.5km practice circuit was designed with safety in mind, and can be ridden by anyone from low intermediate upwards. Rider reaction so far has been universally positive.

Our monthly maintenance mornings have become bi-monthly - thanks to the efforts of many of our Pinjar regulars. There simply wasn't enough cleaning up to be done every month! I would like to recognise and thank those of you who not only clean up after yourselves but also do some general cleaning up of other people's mess while you're there. It is really appreciated - and it is noticed by our friends at DPaW who are not citing the Pinjar area as a model of user-care.

I would also like to make specific mention of our Committee member, Stacey Pike (Spike) who has thrown herself into coordinating the Maintenance Mornings at Pinjar and developing a team of willing helpers. Thanks Spike!

The resurfaced PeeWee and Family Trails are holding up well, although the Family Trail which was supposed to be lightly graded every three months has not had any attention for nearly a year. We'll be able to address that maintenance issue now that the Short n Curly trail is finished.

With the Family Zone car park filled to capacity on many weekends we are hoping that Short n Curly will draw the more advanced riders over to the western advanced zone car park. We're also confident that DPaW will be able to grade the North and South Loops more regularly so that they will appeal to a broader spectrum of riders.

Pinjar is now generating interest from land managers in other states. The idea of a free, open, publicly available area was considered unworkable by many observers and the Queensland government took a different approach and sunk millions of dollars into a commercial ride park now run by Motorcycling Queensland. Wyaralong is a terrific facility, but at a cost of around \$200 a day for a family of four it's not seen as an every week routine like Pinjar is to so many families.

This year we set up a dedicated Pinjar Motorcycle Area Facebook page. This is proving a very useful way of communicating to riders and has already generated over 1,000 'Likes' and 184,000 total impressions.

The one cloud on the Pinjar horizon is the plan to clear the pine trees. As many of you will know, DPaW owns the land but not the trees, which are pre-sold under a State Agreement. We have held talks with the Forest Products Commission and have reached a compromise agreement which will see the areas furthest from the car parks logged first, and DPaW are planning to 'prehabilitate' the area by planting native trees that will provide some shade even before the pine trees are cleared.

The RTRA is especially grateful for the interest and commitment shown over the past year by Parks and Visitor Services Manager, Brett Fitzgerald at the DPaW Swan Coastal Region.

## **Gnangara**

The harvesting of the Gnangara pines will enable the eventual transformation of this area. The 'Lexia



Loop' was funded by DSR and developed as an interim trail to cater for this eventuality and we will review future planning for Gngangara shortly.

### **Metro Road**

The 16km 'Pilot Trail' is providing us with a demonstration of how properly planned and created single trail can be good for the environment.

There is general agreement in government circles that the Metro Road area should be developed as a significant trail riding precinct, however there is as yet no funding announced to commence the master planning work.

We have a cleanup day scheduled for November 8 and we hope to have as big a turnout as we had last year. There is less work to be done, meaning we will get to go riding sooner!

And in return for the RTRA undertaking the cleanup operation, DPaW have provided us with \$5,000 to be spent on trail maintenance and development.

### **Kwinana**

The continuing lack of interest shown by the Town of Kwinana has resulted in no improvements to this area over the past twelve months. Investigations into a replacement site south of the river are continuing.

We will shortly commence a membership drive south of the river. The more members we have the greater will be our ability to create better riding opportunities.

### **York**

The RTRA has not had any direct involvement in the excellent little York Off Road Vehicle Area but I would like to record our appreciation, on behalf of the users of that facility, to the local Ranger, Matt Sharpe for his efforts.

### **Commercial Ride Parks**

The RTRA acknowledges and supports the efforts of Western Australia's commercial ride park operators, West Coast Trail Bike Park, West MotoPark, the Duck's Nuts and Dirt Riders' Heaven.

These operators provide facilities that could never be possible on public lands and they do so with private funding and an enormous amount of personal effort.

The RTRA encourages members to support these facilities.

### **Public Trails**

Western Australia has a huge inventory of public trails that are open and available to registered bikes and licensed riders. The RTRA is committed to preserving our access to these trails by vigorously defending any attempts to exclude motorised access and by educating riders on minimal impact techniques to better protect the trails and the surrounding environment.



## Member Communications

The RTRA Web Site and eNewsletter continue to keep riders up to date with the activities of the Association, and also with useful information and news of other influences that affect trail bike riding in WA.

Our Facebook page at [www.rtra.asn.au/facebook](http://www.rtra.asn.au/facebook) now has just under 2,500 'Likes', ranking it ahead of the Munda Biddi, Bibbulmun Track and WAMBA pages. We will continue to develop this page, but will always give advanced notice to financial RTRA members!

## Education, Awareness and Attitude Shift

To create a sustainable future for trail bike riding we must be effective in encouraging riders to take a responsible attitude to the environment and other trails users.

We also need to help non-riders understand what it is that we do and why we are so passionate about it.

Our Minimal Impact Riding Program continues to drip-feed positive messages to help riders understand how they can protect the environment without spoiling their fun.

This year we have been marketing our 'So Where Can I Ride' booklet to local councils. So far six local councils have bought into the program and we are continuing to work on the others.

Just after the last AGM we had our most successful ever Perth Motorcycle Show display. The double size booth was packed with interested riders and families and we signed up many new members and distributed hundreds of booklets, ride park brochures, information kits and stickers. Charley Boorman dropped by and was very impressed with what the RTRA is doing for riders.

## The Committee

This year we welcomed Stacey Pike, Paul Knight, Leon Fry and Jasmine Khalid to the committee. Unfortunately Leon and Jasmine had to pull out due to time conflicts with work.

The RTRA would not be able to operate without the input and enthusiasm of the Committee. On behalf of all members, and from my personal perspective, I thank you all for your contribution.



## Key Challenges for the next 12 months

As always there are lots of challenges ahead. Here are the ones that I believe are the most significant:

- Master Planning for the Metro Road Regional Trail bike precinct
- Identifying one or more suitable locations for a Pinjar style family-friendly facility south of the river
- Stay close to the mountain bike master planning process in the South West and ensure that trail bike riders have adequate voice in the planning process. If mountain bikes can have new single trail then so can we!
- Building on the encouraging start to the Off Road Motorcycle Industry Forum to secure real engagement with manufacturers and retailers
- Continue to attract new members and increase our proportion of renewals.

I would like to close by thanking all those members who have supported the Association by contributing time to our initiatives and generally spreading the word to other riders about the work of the Association. Thank you all.

Your association is now receiving international recognition for the work that we do on behalf of recreational trail and quad bike riders. We have some excellent runs on the board and we aim to step up our momentum in the year ahead.